

FROM WASHINGTON.

The Passage of the Banking Bill.

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A Malignant Attack on General Hooker.

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A CONFERENCE ON THE WAYS AND MEANS.

THE TERRITORY OF ARIZONA

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

THE PASSAGE OF THE BANK BILL.

The Bank bill passed the House to-day by a majority of 15. A motion previously made to lay it on the table failed by a vote of 87 to 89. Secretary Chase occupied the Speaker's room during the proceedings. The Yeas and Nays were as follows:

This action was the result of an arrangement between the advocates of the national currency scheme and the Ways and Means Committee and those friendly to the issue of three hundred millions more of additional legal tender, that if the latter would go for the Bank bill, the former would go for the Legal Tender, and give it passage through the Senate in the Conference Committee.

There will probably be a compromise over the section taxing banks.

REPORTED CAPTURE OF VICKSBURG.

Gen. Rosecrans telegraphed the War Department a day or two ago that Rebel officers, in consequence of conversation under a flag of truce, had remarked: "Well, you have got Vicksburg at last." No confirmation of the fact implied in this remark has, however, yet been received, and its truth is doubtful.

THE REPORTED EXCLUSION OF THE WORLD FROM THE ARMY.

The news successfully disseminated through the country that the Provost-Marshal of the Army had suppressed the sale of *The World* newspaper was a malignant falsehood aimed at the new Commander by the disloyal and envious, who seek to incite him between two fires. Though the popular judgment is that *The World* deserves total suppression, it has not been done.

THE CASE OF GEN. MCKINSTRY.

The General Order in the case of Gen. McKinstry covers 35 printed pages, and is of course too long to be telegraphed in full. After the formal statement of the orders upon which the Court Martial was summoned, it proceeds as follows:

Major James McKinstry, Quartermaster U. S. A. Charge—Neglect and violation of duty, to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. Sixty-one specifications, drawn with great ability by Staff T. Glover of St. Louis, a recent candidate for the United States Senate, and the findings of the Court follow.

Upon thirty-five of these specifications McKinstry is found not guilty, and upon twenty-six guilty, in whole or in part. The order concludes as follows:

And the Court do therefore sentence Major James McKinstry, Quartermaster U. S. Army, to be dismissed from the service.

The foregoing finding and sentence are approved, but exercising the discretion given by article 89 of the Rules and Articles of War, the execution of the sentence is suspended until the pleasure of the President of the United States can be known. Upon the recommendation of some members of the Court for a remission or mitigation of the sentence, this suspension and the proceedings of the Court Martial being transmitted to the President for his determination.

H. W. HALLICK, General-in-Chief.

The following are the orders of the President:

"The sentence in the foregoing case will be carried into execution by the dismissal of Major James McKinstry, Quartermaster U. S. Army, from the service of the United States."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

REPORTED REPULSE OF GEN. BANKS AT PORT HUDSON.

For the second time a vague report is in circulation, through Rebel sources (being conveyed to Gen. Rosecrans by a flag of truce), to the effect that Gen. Banks has been repulsed at Port Hudson. No particulars are given, and Gen. Rosecrans adds that he sends these reports for what they are worth.

FLAGS FOR THE BROOKLYN FOURTEENTH.

The rotunda of the Capitol was ornamented to-day with a set of beautiful flags sent by the ladies of Brooklyn to the 14th Regiment.

CONFERENCE ON WAYS AND MEANS.

The Committee of Conference on the Ways and Means bill was appointed to-night. It consists of Senators Freese, Sherman, and Hicks, and of Representatives Morrill of Vermont, Vallandigham, and Fenton. It is still thought that the Committee will report in favor of the House section authorizing the issue of three hundred millions legal tender, and will compromise the disagreement between the two Houses on the Bank taxing section, so as to make the tax a light one.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

Senator Wilson will introduce a bill, to-morrow, organizing a National Academy of Sciences, on the plan of the French Academy, to consist of fifty members, and to be charged with the prosecution of such scientific investigations, in addition to its own, as Government may intrust to it.

WHEELSHAW ARSENAL AND ORDNANCE DEPOT.

The bill for the establishment of an arsenal and ordnance depot at Wheelshaw was duly reported from the Military Committee, but has slumbered since in Committee of the Whole. Its prospects for renewal look bad.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS.

The Senate has returned to the President one hundred and fifty nominations for Hospital Chaplains, there being no law authorizing their appointment. There can be Chaplains for permanent Hospitals, but the Senate are rather determinedly disposed consider that under the law, there are but few permanent Hospitals in the country. Those now are already supplied with Chaplains. There has been an immense rush for these places.

ACCIDENTS ON STEAMBOATS TRANSPORTING GUNPOWDER.

The House Military Committee has instructed one of its members to report a bill exempting steamboats from liability for accidents from their transportation of gunpowder contrary to law, when that transportation shall be for account of the Government.

THE TERRITORY OF ARIZONA.

The bill constituting the Territory of Arizona, which passed the Senate to-day, has already passed the House, so that it only requires the signature of the President to become a law.

THE TERRITORY OF MONTANA.

Letters from prominent residents of Washington Territory were received to-day, protesting against the division made by the House bill erecting the Territory of Montana. One of these gentlemen declares that Washington Territory, as now constituted, will not for the next ten years contain population enough for a State.

New-York Tribune.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1863. PRICE THREE CENTS.

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To the Associated Press. WASHINGTON, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

THE FRAUDS IN THE NEW-YORK CUSTOM-HOUSE.

Secretary Chase communicates to the Senate, in answer to a resolution, a statement of Edward Jordan, Solicitor of the Treasury, relative to frauds in the New-York Custom-House, showing that frauds upon the revenue had been committed for at least six years past, effected by making out false invoices, representing different descriptions and lower prices of goods than were actually imported, and then securing the passage of such invoices by various devices through the Custom-House.

In some cases a portion of the goods were correctly invoiced, and these particular packages examined. Invoices were sometimes made in fictitious names, and sometimes the goods of one person were entered in the name of another. In some instances the importer was cognizant of the fraud; in others his broker was responsible alone. Entries and invoices, when completed, were in some cases destroyed and obliterated.

About \$50,000 have been recovered by seizures of goods belonging to parties implicated. About 100 fraudulent entries by James R. Van Vechten, Marcellus Bellis and B. Griggs, have been discovered. The first have been dismissed, and placed under bonds; the others are suspended, and the District-Attorney has been requested to indict them.

Henry Calhoun, the Deputy Collector, is accused for want of vigilance; Wm. A. Leffingwell and the clerks in the Record Bureau, are deemed culpable and careless. It is evident that frauds in importation are constantly and systematically practiced in jewelry, lace and silks, and other costly goods by smuggling in various ways, in other goods through false invoices.

Facts show that money in large sums has been received by officials for fraudulent sales or connivance; and a belief is stated that nearly all the officers are in the habitual receipt of emoluments from importers and their agents.

One lawyer says he has, in fifteen months, paid \$1,500 to one record clerk. Van Vechten admits having received \$2,500 per annum. A bond clerk, on a salary of \$1,000, in eight years, accumulated \$20,000.

He recommends, first, the designation of an officer at Washington, charged with the prevention and detection of frauds on the revenue; second, new regulations concerning invoices and entries of foreign merchandise; third, the criminal punishment of the guilty; fourth, the prohibition of all emoluments from importers; fifth, provision for securing proof against such frauds.

ARIZONA.

The Senate to-day passed the bill organizing the Territory of Arizona. It only wants the signature of the President to become a law. This Territory contains 120,000 square miles, and is, therefore, larger than three States of the size of Ohio.

It is said by those who have spent several years there, to contain more and richer silver and copper mines than any territory under the Government. Gold is also found in many parts of the Territory. Hostile Indians have heretofore prevented extensive operations in the mines, but with a Government such as is about to be established, they will be fully developed.

It is asserted by persons who have opportunities to form a correct judgment that the richest silver mines of the world are found in Arizona. There are 1,500 troops near there, and it is probable that the number will be soon largely increased.

SEIZURE OF THREE WESTERN STEAMERS.

Fleet-Captain Penock, under date of Cairo, yesterday, informed the Secretary of the Navy that the steamers Rowena, White Cloud, and Knapp have been seized as prizes by the gunboat New Era at or near Island No. 10, for containing contraband goods, such as quinine and morphine in large quantities, arsenic, Rebel uniforms, army blankets, and other general merchandise contraband of war.

The White Cloud had on board a large Rebel mail, containing important information. The steamer Howe was seized by Admiral Porter, and sent up there from below.

An exploded story of Gen. Banks having been defeated near Port Hudson has been revived.

The Government has received no unfavorable information whatever from that quarter.

M. MERCIER AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Attention has been called to the report in a New-York paper, which has been made the subject of pointed comment, that members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations have been most earnest and demonstrative in professions of friendship to M. Mercier and to the Government he represents. On inquiry, it appears that M. Mercier's dispatches and the relations with France, as shown by the recent dispatches, have not been considered in the Committee, nor is it known that any member of the Committee has made any demonstrations to M. Mercier.

Some of the Committee attended the recent diplomatic dinner of Mr. Seward, given since the publication of the Richmond dispatch, where the French Minister was an honored guest; but Mr. Sumner, who at that time was ill, was obliged to decline attending, under the advice of his physician.

There is not a member of the Committee who does not repel all idea of foreign mediation or intervention, whatever form it may take.

BRANCH MINT IN NEVADA.

The Committee of Ways and Means, in their report accompanying the bill establishing a Branch Mint in Nevada Territory, say the discovery of the precious metals warrant the belief that in a few years it will, in that respect, surpass even the "Golden State." A population of some thirty or forty thousand now people the Territory, and millions of dollars have been expended in prospecting and working the mines, erecting quartz mills, with massive reducing machinery, and ingenious separating processes. Several thriving towns and numerous villages have sprung up.

The great business of the Territory is and must be mining. The estimated yield of gold and silver at the present time is \$2,000,000 per month, with a constant prospect of an increase, as new machinery is put in operation. An additional reason for the establishment of a mint is the peculiar situation of the Territory, and its dependence on distant markets, whence all its supplies are drawn. All the supplies of food, clothing, machinery, etc., are imported into the Territory.

But little save the precious metals is produced in the Territory. Payment for these supplies and the necessary transportation is made in the Territory. The cost of transporting the bullion from the mines to California is from five to four per cent. The returns are received in about thirty days, with an additional cost of two per cent in carrying back the coin. The transportation of silver is still more expensive.

The daily average of tons bound up is 74; the number of tons transported daily up is 178; the number of stage passengers both ways, 37; the total number of travelers, including stage passengers, is 165. Estimating the yearly average of freight over the Placerville road to be 130 tons per day, at an average of 6 cents per pound, and the total amount paid for freight alone amounts to \$5,255,000 upon this one road.

FOUR DAYS LATER FROM NEW-ORLEANS.

SUPPRESSION OF THE DELTA NEWSPAPER.

The Teehe Expedition Not Yet Off.

AN EXPEDITION SENT AGAINST BUTE LA ROSE.

Doings of the Rebel Legislature.

CRUEL TREATMENT OF COLORED SOLDIERS.

AFFAIRS AT BATON ROUGE.

The United States steamer McClellan, Alfred G. Gray, commander, arrived yesterday morning from the bar at the mouth of the Mississippi River. She left on the 11th a. m., and arrived off the bar at Sandy Hook on the 18th, 12 p. m., and was detained there sixteen hours by the fog.

The United States Mail steamer Geo. Cromwell, Capt. Post, from New-Orleans Feb. 12, with merchandise and passengers to H. B. Cromwell & Co., arrived last evening. Feb. 19, lat. 35° 30', lon. 74° 43', passed a raft with a signal hoisted on a pole—blue and red, horizontal. Off Barataria, 20th, 8 a. m., spoke brig Florence of Portland bound north. The G. C. was detained at the mouth of the Mississippi 33 hours by fog. Has experienced heavy weather.

The most important event since the departure of the previous packet was the suppression of *The Daily Delta*, edited by Capt. Clark and Col. E. M. Brown. It had not transpired what induced the step, as up to the day before the order of suspension Gen. Banks had appeared to be well satisfied with the management of the paper.

The printers of the office had called upon the editors, and they advised the workmen to wait upon Gen. Banks and represent to him that their source of subsistence was in the continuance of the paper. Upon this, the General directed that the paper be continued under the management of the bookkeeper, Mr. Henry Green.

There was a good deal of exultation in Secession circles, and many prominent citizens had called upon Col. Brown and Capt. Clark, and thanked them for the services rendered, but could not extort from them the cause of the act.

It was thought, however, that the editors were unwarlike because of an article on the impolicy of excluding the captured portions of the South from the privileges of the President's Proclamation. It was surmised by others that the French Consul and Reverdy Johnson had induced Gen. Banks to take the step he had taken.

Nothing of military moment has transpired. There were rumors that the Rebels had attacked the Mobile blockaders after the fashion of Galveston, but nothing definite was known. The Brooklyn and the Scoto were blockading Galveston.

The following order relating to the exchange of prisoners has been issued by Gen. Banks, under date of the 9th:

I. All prisoners of war in this department taken from the enemy, and sent on parole, who have not taken the oath of allegiance, will report on Friday, the 21st inst., at Union City, at the foot of Canal street, in this city, for passage via the River Rouge, through the lines, under flag of truce.

Such as have not already been registered will report at the Provost-Marshal's Office, No. 177 Canal-street, in time to be registered.

Officers of the United States having Confederate prisoners of war in custody will forward them to this city under guard, in time for registration and passage on transport, as above provided.

II. By General Order No. 19, of January 10, 1863, from the War Department, Adjutant-General's office, the following orders and rules are declared fully exchanged as prisoners of war: All captures of officers, enlisted men and camp followers in the States of Texas and Louisiana up to January 1, 1863; all captures of officers, enlisted men and camp followers in the States of Florida, Alabama and Mississippi up to December 10, 1862; all captures on the sea, the sea and gulf coasts, and the waters flowing into the same, up to December 10, 1862.

All officers and enlisted men of the United States in this Department, herein declared exchanged, will immediately report for duty with their proper commands and regiments.

The Teehe Expedition—Negrophobia—Cruel Treatment of the Colored Soldiers—Affairs at Baton Rouge—The Reported Capture of the Brooklyn.

From Our Special Correspondent.

St. CHARLES HOTEL, NEW-ORLEANS, La., Feb. 12, 1863.

Contrary to the anticipations expressed in my last letter, I have nothing to communicate respecting Gen. Weitzel's proposed expedition into the Teehe country, for the purpose of "cleaning out" the Rebels there. As the General was in this city yesterday (I write at early morning), I suppose one of those apparently inevitable delays attendant on military operations has intervened. From up the river, however, I derive the particulars of Col. Paine's movement, designed to act in conjunction with that of Gen. Weitzel from below, as heretofore related. They are as follows:

Col. Paine, Acting Brigadier-General, left Baton Rouge on the morning of Saturday, the 7th, with three transports—the *Iberville*, *Continental* and *Che-Kiang*—conveying the 4th Wisconsin, the 8th New-Hampshire, the 13th and 17th New-York. These troops disembarked at Plaquemine, thirty miles below, on the west bank of the Mississippi, and marched straightway inland to a place denominated Indian Village, at seven miles distance, comprising about half a dozen miserable cabins. Arriving at sunset, the troops bivouacked for the night, the *Iberville* following with the transports and tents, and a guard of cavalry by way of Plaquemine Bayou. There our troops temporarily encamped, at no great distance from a crevasse which has already submerged some adjacent woods. Two weeks ago this Indian village was occupied by a band of guerrillas, who were driven off by a company of United States cavalry.

The *Iberville* took on board, in lieu of her military stores, upward of \$1,000 worth of sugar and molasses, from the neighboring planters, who professed themselves rejoiced at the opportunity of transmitting their produce to New-Orleans. It lies now at the levee of this city.

Gen. Amory left here for Carrollton yesterday, to proceed with the following regiments to the reinforcement of Col. Foster: The 38th and 4th Massachusetts, 15th New-York, 16th New-Hampshire, and a section of the 15th New-York Battery. With these there may be others. Combining with the four regiments under Col. Paine, the entire force will push for Baton Rouge, there to effect a junction with Gen. Weitzel.

At Baton Rouge things are quiet, but hardly satisfactory. I am informed that two identities, indigenous to this Department, have appeared there—that they are, indeed, horribly prevalent. I allude, in the first place, to the plague of speculators, akin to that of Egyptian locusts; secondly, to the disease negrophobia—a moral leprosy through which our nationality may yet grope its way to the pit of destruction. In a former letter I have surmised that perhaps the only effectual cure for the first evil would be in a big crevasse, desecrating the whole of us. With respect to the second, I have hitherto preserved a reticence, which I shall now break.

Three weeks ago there was sent up to Baton Rouge the 3d Louisiana Native Guard—a colored regiment, commanded by Col. J. A. Nelson, formerly a Captain in the 31st Mass., and Provost-Marshal of Ship Island. Having previously mustered in two colored regiments, this officer became satisfied of their docility and efficiency, and himself accepted command of a third. The men were principally recruited in New-Orleans, and did good service in the Bayou Teche fight, ending in the destruction of the Rebel gunboat Cotton and the death of Commander Buchanan—particularly in throwing up defensive earthworks, a kind of labor always unwillingly performed by white troops. So satisfactory was their behavior, that it is known to have won the approval of Gen. Weitzel, himself anything but a believer in the military capacity of the race. Well, the men were sent to Baton Rouge—the regiment being full 1,000 strong; ten colored officers—four captains and six non-commissioned officers—forming part of the command. They drilled well, marched well, kept themselves clean, performed all their duties as soldiers—nothing in the world is alleged against them but that they are negroes, and have negro officers; hence the ill-will, the detestation, with which they are regarded.

I am informed that Gen. Grover will not "recognize" the regiment; that he has asserted that in case he shall be officially required to do so, the United States Government is welcome to his commission; that the regiment can neither draw clothing, blankets, nor pay in consequence; that the officers of certain white regiments vindicate the purity of their cause on every possible occasion by insulting the colored ones; that some of the former have resigned, that the Colonel of the 13th New-York—An Englishman—has distinguished himself by issuing an address exhorting his men "to continue in the performance of their duty until such time as the regiment is brought into contact with" the negroes "by guard duty, drill, or otherwise, when he trusts that his men have that confidence in him to believe that he will not suffer their self-respect or equality to be lowered by contact with an inferior race." Gen. and generally, that the Union soldiers, rank file, are doing their meanest to induce the negroes to regret their old normal state of chattelism and their Southern owners.

"Between the devil and the deep sea" is a nautical conception of a dilemma. Between Jeff. Davis's threats of hanging and the wicked prejudice, hatred, contempt, and ill usage experienced at our hands, the poor Africans are evilly entangled. Gen. Hunt has countered just the same difficulties in organizing colored regiments in South Carolina, and—God bless him for it—squelched them. I hope Gen. Banks will do the same. Col. Nelson is here to request it. This stone that the builders so persistently and contemptuously reject is yet to become the head of the corner, or we, with it tied about our necks, sink to deserved oblivion. I hold that God's meaning in this war is to free the slave, and was he to him who fights against it and him, directly or indirectly.

Even the report of an individual, who was recently allowed to pass outside our lines at Baton Rouge, and those of the Rebels, "on business," and who journeyed some 10 miles inland, I am informed that the country is very quiet and food plentiful. He remained for a day or two, regaling on chickens, wheat and corn bread, fresh butter and coffee, and a week ago the Rebels at Port Hudson hanged an ex-resident of Baton Rouge, known as "Monkey Joe," for spiking, or attempting to spike, one of their guns; it was alleged in consequence of a great reward offered to him by one of our Generals! Two other persons were under arrest suspected of similar intentions. All the pickets in the neighborhood are Tennessee Cavalry, excellently mounted.

At Baton Rouge, Southern Confederacy shillings are generally taken by our soldiers as money, at the rate of forty cents on the dollar. Any paper bearing the endorsement of Pike, President of the Branch Bank of the State of Louisiana, circulates freely. One hundred dollars of Confederate notes are considered equivalent to half that amount in New-Orleans bills, and \$25 in gold.

Mr. Benjamin, brother to the Rebel Secretary of War, came to this city from Baton Rouge, on the *Iberville*, during her last trip. I know nothing distinguishable about him except his relationship and a general physical resemblance to Count Foco, in Willie Collins's novel.

In my last letter, or the one preceding it, I sent Commodore Farragut, on board his flagship Hartford, to Galveston, Texas. He got no further than the bar at the mouth of the Mississippi this time, then returning. It is understood that he will start in earnest soon; that he is impatient to do so.

Yesterday's and to-day's New-Orleans papers will bring you a report of the stranding of the Brooklyn, off Galveston; also, of her capture by the Alabama, the *Harriet Lane*, and some other Rebel craft. This story is discredited in every particular by the Navy.

Another contraband schooner, laden with medicines, was captured yesterday in the attempt to cross Lake Pontchartrain to the northern shore.

The Secessionists here have a wild story about the assassination of Gen. Butler, by Boulogne, in New-York, and much more of an equally probable character—very much more than I care to particularize.

T. B. G.

FROM THE ARMY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

The Ham Queen of the West gone on an Expedition up the Red River—Sickness in the Army of Vicksburg—The Town of De Soto nearly submerged—The Union Forces in Front of the City—The Mortar-Bombs Ready for Action—The Town of Bolivar Landing Destroyed.

CHICAGO, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

A telegram from Cairo says that the Ham Queen of the West has gone on an expedition up the Red River, for the purpose of destroying Rebel vessels. If she succeeds, one of the chief sources of Rebel supplies will be cut off.

A special dispatch from Cairo says that the sickness in the Army of Vicksburg is increasing.

A large containing 7,000 bushels of coal ran the blockade on Saturday night without accident or discovery.

The *Vicksburg Whig* of the 9th inst. says that the river is overflowing the banks on the Louisiana side. The town of De Soto, opposite Vicksburg, is nearly submerged, and it is expected that the whole peninsula will soon be under water.

The *Jackson Appeal's* correspondence of the 9th inst. says that there is now no longer any doubt that the whole force of the Unionists is concentrated within seeing distance of the city of Vicksburg. The mortar-boats were towed down yesterday to a point near the rendezvous of the fleet, and every moment it is expected that the commencement of the attack will be announced.

The town of Bolivar Landing, fifty miles above Memphis, has been destroyed by the gunboat *Conestoga*, in retaliation for the guerrilla firing into the steamer *Jenny Lind*.

The War in the South West.

LOUISIANA, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

It is reported that the Rebel Colonels Tucker, Schewalt, and White, with from 600 to 1,000 mounted men have crossed the Cumberland at Mill Spring and are bound Northward.

The reports of large bodies of Rebel Cavalry recently crossing the Cumberland River are not credited at Headquarters.

News from Memphis and Vicinity.

CAIRO, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

It is reported at Memphis that 4,000 Rebels are within six miles of the Charleston Railroad.

The tow boat *Hercules* was burned by guerrillas on Tuesday last just above Memphis.

LATE SOUTHERN NEWS.

Legislation Against Rebel Retaliation Orders—Large Bounties for Rebel Substitutes—Reports from Vicksburg—Departure of Gen. Foster for the South.

PORTSMOUTH, Thursday, Feb. 19, 1863.

Col. Wm. H. Ludlow has just returned from City Point, from a conference with Mr. Ould, the Rebel Commissioner.

The Virginia Legislature will override Gov. Letcher in his late attempt at retaliation in imprisoning United States officers, and will transfer to the Rebel authorities where it properly belongs under the cartel all matters connected with the exchange of prisoners.

It is now quite certain that the Rebel Congress will override Mr. Jeff. Davis in his retaliatory proclamation and message, and exchanges will go on as heretofore under the cartel. Arrangements for the exchange of civilians have been perfected.

Gen. Foster left Fortress Monroe to-day for the South, on the steamship Spaulding.

The *Richmond Dispatch* of the 17th contains an advertisement for substitutes for service in the Rebel army, offering a bounty of \$2,000 apiece.

The *Dispatch* also has the following items:

The Florida has sent the Anne Bonnell, with troops for New-Orleans, to the bottom.

Gunpowder is selling here at \$8 1/2 lb; Ten 65 1/2 lb; 40 lb; Chloroform \$15 50 lb; Black Broadcloth \$16 50 lb; 22 1/2 lb; Gray Cloth \$18.

The whole of the Yankee army is leaving Acquia Creek, the greater portion bound to Washington and the remainder to Old Point. The object of this move is to recruit and reorganize.

The enemy are engaged in throwing up batteries on the Louisiana shore, to protect their men when they commence throwing pontoon bridges across the river. Our authorities anticipate an early attack, and our forces are preparing for the enemy day and night. All quiet now.

FROM VICKSBURG.

VICKSBURG, 14th.—One of the Union gunboats passed our batteries last night, under cover of darkness. Several shots were fired at her without taking effect. All quiet this morning.

The United States gunboat *Sacramento*, Capt. Rogers, arrived in Hampton Roads this forenoon from Portsmouth, N. H.

The storm of rain and wind from the north-east continues.

Skirmish near Lake Providence, La.

CAIRO, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

A skirmish occurred between a small party of Unionists and 300 of the 1st Louisiana Cavalry, on the 10th, near Lake Providence, which resulted in the rout of the latter. Their loss is unknown. 25 prisoners were taken. Our loss was one killed and 12 wounded.

The *Keokuk* (Ill.) Constitution Destroyed—The Types Thrown into the Streets.

CHICAGO, Friday, Feb. 20, 1863.

The office of *The Keokuk Constitution* was destroyed yesterday by the convulsions in the Hospital. The types were thrown into the streets, and the presses broken up and part of them thrown into the river.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND MR. MERCIER.

From An Occasional Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20, 1863.

Three days ago, a secret interview is said to have taken place at a friend's house between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Mercier, in which, if I am to trust my informant, questions of the greatest moment were reviewed and discussed.

Notwithstanding the mystery observed in that interview, it is reported in diplomatic circles that Mr. Lincoln denies having had any share in the framing of the document written in reply to Drouyn de Lhuys's proposition, further than to have expressed, in cabinet council that the time for listening to the kind suggestions of France had not yet arrived.

He was very sorry to learn that exception had been taken to the form in which the views of the Cabinet had been set forth; and he hoped that the French Government would only notice the necessity imposed upon the Administration to refuse his proposition, without paying any attention to the manner in which that refusal had been presented.